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# PHILIP II AND THE FREEDOM OF THE THESSALIANS*

Demosthenes used all his skills to present Philip as a threat to the freedom of the Greeks. Cooperation with Philip was for him *a dreadful plague which has come upon all Greece*. He describes with deep disgust the cities of Greece, who had betrayed their own independence and brought servitude on themselves, a servitude disguised as the friendship and companionship of Philip. The author could not understand why the Arcadians, who should feel the highest pride in their liberty, admired Philip and erected a bronze statue of him, adorning it with garlands (19.260).[1]

The Thessalians were for Demosthenes a good example of a nation that lost its freedom and, deceived by Philip, *turned out to be his slaves*. In Demosthenes' opinion, Thessaly was suffering from a lack of independence. Restrained by Philip, who garrisoned some of her strong points, she lost her leadership and general prestige (19.260). Philip expelled the tyrants from the country only to put the Thessalian cities under the *decadarchia* or "Rule of Ten" (6.22).[2] He robbed them of free Thessalian institutions and set up *tetrarchies* to enslave them not only city by city but also tribe by tribe (9.26). Philip was sending letters to the cities ordering them to adopt particular political systems (9.31). However, the Thessalians were responsible for losing their freedom. They belonged to *the party of collaboration in the ruin and dishonour of Greece*. Demosthenes names them, together with the Dolopians, as an example of a people that helped Philip to acquire the command of Greece (18.63). He puts three Thessalian names at the top of his famous list of twenty seven traitors *who cast aside the interest of Greece for their own dishonest gain, by misleading and corrupting their own cities in each case, till they brought them down to slavery* (18.295 trans A.N.W. Saunders)[3].

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[1] On Demosthenes, Philip II and the end of Greek liberty see among many others: Ryder 1994: 228–257; Ryder 2000: 45–89; Cawkwell 1996: 98–121; Buckler 1996: 77–97; Buckler 2000: 114–158.

[2] For the discussion of this term see Hammond/Griffith 1979: 527–533.

[3] Ryder 1994: 231–232.

But in Demosthenes' speeches one can also find a different picture of Philip's relations with Thessaly. In the first and second *Olynthiac* orations (1.22; 2.11), dated to some time in the years 349/8, Demosthenes writes that the Thessalians demanded that Philip return Pagasae to them and that they prevented the fortification of Magnesia. He also reports some rumours that they *will no longer hand over to him the profits of their harbours and markets.* Philip returned Magnesia to the Thessalians and also handed over to them Nicaea, a fort guarding Thermopylae (6.22). Demosthenes could not deny that Philip came to the Thessalians' aid in their feuds and struggle against the tyrants (2.14). Philip promised to pursue war with the Phocians (2.7) and to re-establish Thessalians in the Amphictyonic Council (19.318) and he fulfilled both promises. In the year 341 Demosthenes noticed that *it would not have been safe in Thessaly to plead Philip's cause, if the commoners of Thessaly had not shared in the advantages that Philip conferred when he expelled their tyrants and restored to them their Amphictyonic privileges* (8. 64).

Isocrates confirms that the relations between Philip and the Thessalians were very good. In his speech *To Philip*, dated 346, he observes that Philip managed to get the Thessalians on his side and to build *an attitude so friendly to him that every Thessalian has more confidence in him than in his own fellow-countrymen* (5.20, G. Norlin trans.) A few years later, around 342, in his letter to Philip, Isocrates praises him for his manner of dealing with the Thessalians, which was *just and advantageous to them*, although they are *not easy to handle, but high-spirited and seditious.* Likewise, Isocrates encourages Philip to adopt the same attitude towards the Athenians (*Epist.* 2. 20). It is hardly possible that he should write in such a manner if he felt that the Thessalians, deprived of their freedom, had become Philip's slaves.

Diodorus, writing from a more distant time perspective, presents a similar assessment of Philip's relations with the Thessalians. The key word of his account seems to be *eunoia* – goodwill — supposedly shown by Philip. More than once, Diodorus mentions Philip's interventions into Thessalian affairs aimed against the tyrants and the Phocians. Expelling the tyrants from the cities of Thessaly reportedly brought him great popularity (16.69.8). The historian assesses the whole of Philip's activity in Thessaly in the same spirit. In his brief discussion of his relations with the Thessalians (16.14.2) he emphasises that having expelled the tyrants *he regained freedom for the cities and demonstrated his great good will towards the Thessalians.* As a result not only he himself but also his son Alexander won faithful allies in the Thessalians (16.14.2). This is confirmed by his report that after Philip's death Alexander easily won the Thessalians over with *kindly words and rich promises* (17.4.1).[4]

The most enigmatic account comes from Justin's Epitome of the *Philippic Histories of Pompeius Trogus.* According to this report, Philip conquered Larissa and Thessaly not for spoil, but to take over the command of the famous Thessalian cavalry (7.6.8). His purpose could not have been the subjugation of Thessaly, since Justin later writes that the Thessalians together with the Boeotians voluntarily chose him as their general for the war with Phocis, preferring him to any of their own countrymen (8.2.1), and asked him to accept this function (8.4.2). This version is not fundamentally different from earlier descriptions of Philip's friendly relations with the Thessalians, with the notable exception of 8.3.1. Philip's treacherous behaviour towards his allies is described with great emotion here. The king

[4] Ryder 1995: 249; Errington 1990: 60–61.

supposedly attacked and ransacked cities, plundered sacred sites and sold women and children into slavery. The passage does not clearly state that the region in question was Thessaly, but there are allusions that the destroyed cities had been under his command until recently. Even if the author does refer to Thessaly in this fragment, it seems highly exaggerated and it is not confirmed by any other account.[5] Although Polyaenus describes the methods that enabled Philip to win control over Thessaly, they are a far cry from the drastic solutions reported by Justin. According to Polyaenus, Philip's stratagem was skilful intervention in the constant arguments among the cities of Thessaly. The king willingly gave his support to those who asked for his help but he was careful not to humiliate the defeated: *he did not destroy the cities of the vanquished, nor disarm them, nor dismantle their walls.* However, he reportedly fuelled discord inside the cities by taking the side of the weaker against the stronger: *he was the friend of the populace in the cities, and he cultivated their leaders* (4.2.19).

Even with Philip's greatest goodwill, interventions in Thessaly's internal affairs must have led to discontent on the part of those who lost their power and position to Philip. Pherae and Pagasae, besieged and forced to garrison a Macedon squad, may certainly be included in this group. Exiles from the cities of Tricca and Pharcadon, some of the Aleudae of Larissa and the citizens of Halus, forced to capitulate and handed over to the control of Pharsalus, could not have had fond memories of Philip.[6] Undoubtedly those who gained from Philip's friendship must have had a completely different opinion, like Eudicus, one of those established by Philip as lords of all Thessaly. Following the example of his predecessors, from the very beginning Philip associated with the Aleudae of Larissa, who he aided against the sons of Jason of Pherae. He supported Simus, Daochus, Cineas, Thrasydaeus, and Agathocles, who was to gain considerable influence over Philip. Probably it was not affection alone that induced him to marry Philina of Larissa, the mother of Philip Arrhidaeus who, although of unsound mind, was elected king of Macedon. His second Thessalian marriage to Nikesipolis, Jason of Pherae's niece, entered into after abolishing the tyranny of Jason's sons, must have been an important political statement. A daughter born of this marriage, Thessalonike, became the wife of Kassander. The assessment of Philip's activity in Thessaly aroused emotions even many years later, as evidenced by Polybius (9.33; 18.14.4).[7]

On the basis of the above accounts we may form the impression that a large majority of the Thessalians were satisfied with their relations with Philip. He managed to put an end to a long civil war between the tyrants of Pherae and the rest of the country. He defeated the traditional foes, the Phocians, with whom the Thessalians had been fighting an undeclared war since the beginning of the 5th century. Prior to the Persian Wars the Thessalians had failed to subjugate the Phocians; now it was their turn to invade Thessaly in alliance with

[5] Hammond/Griffitth 1979: 285–295.

[6] Pherae: Demosthenes 1.12–13; 8.59; 9.12; [Demosthenes] 7.32; Diodorus 16.31.6. Tricca and Pharcadon: Theopompus *FGrH* 115 F 82; Diodorus 18.56.5; Polyaenus 4.2.18. Aleuadae: Polyaenus 4.2.11. Halus: Demosthenes 19.2 hyp. 7.

[7] Eudicus: Harpocrat s.v. Aleudae: Diodorus 16.14.1. Simus: Demosthenes 18.48. Daochus, Cineas, Thrasydaeus: Demosthenes 18.295; Polybius 18.14.4; Harpocration s.v. Cineas = Theopompus *FGrH* 115 F 35. Agathocles: *FGrH* 115 F 81. Nikesipolis: Satyrus, fr. 5 ap. Athenaeus. 13.557. Hammond/Griffitth 1979: 285–295 Martin 1985: 255–260.

Pherae. To defeat them and to ensure the Thessalian primacy in the Delphic Amphictiony was a matter of prestige, a matter evident to every Thessalian. Philip managed to execute those tasks, although with some difficulty, and fulfilled the hopes put in him.

We can hardly suspect that the Thessalians were very worried about Philip's interventions in their internal affairs and perceived them as a threat to their independence. Those who received his help, e.g. the Aleudae of Larissa, had reasons to be satisfied and undoubtedly did their best to maintain his support. The voices of those who lost were seldom listened to. In the face of considerable discrepancies between local and individual interests it is doubtful whether those voices had a great impact. In Thessaly there was no man like Demosthenes, as he observed himself (18.304), who would be Philip's firm opponent and an advocate of the need to defend the Thessalians' endangered independence. The political system did not encourage free debate. In Thessaly a group of aristocratic families forming a *dynasteia* had the paramount influence. *Dynasteia* is a form of extreme oligarchy, under whose government the officials holding offices abuse them, and take no account of the opinion of the people as a whole. *Dynasteia* is a narrow group of families, distinguished for their wealth, that decide themselves who will hold office, and only allow in people from their own circle, making the offices virtually hereditary. Aristotle describes in this manner the political system in Larissa and Pharsalus, the two most important cities (*Politics*, 1306 a 19–31) and most probably this was also the case in other Thessalian cities. The central institutions of the Thessalian state seem to be controlled by *dynasteia* as well. The governing elite paid little attention to the will of the majority, which led to tensions that made the Thessalian external policy very inconsistent. For example, at the beginning of the 5th century the Aleudae from Larissa sent an invitation to Xerxes, promising him zealous assistance, despite the disagreement of other citizens. But the Thessalians, according to Herodotus (7.172.1), showed clearly enough that the intrigues of the Aleudae were not to their liking and called the Greeks to defend the Tempe valley. However, when the Greeks — warned by Alexander of Macedon and not feeling secure enough in their position — decided to withdraw, the Thessalians no longer hesitated but whole-heartedly worked in the Persian interest, and in the course of the war they proved of great use to Xerxes (Herodotus 7.6, 7.130.3; 7.172.1).[8] In 424 during the Peloponnesian War aristocrats enabled Spartan commander Brasidas to cross the country with his army without the consent of all Thessalians and against the will of many of them. It was possible, according to Thucydides, because *dynasteia* was the prevailing system in Thessaly (4.78). Somewhat later, however, when the Spartans attempted to bring reinforcements to Brasidas by the same route, this proved to be impossible. This time the Macedonian king Perdiccas, who in fact had concluded an agreement with the Athenians, asked his friends in Thessaly not to allow the Peloponnesians to pass. He had his own friends among the prominent citizens in the country (4.132). Among these was probably Niconidas of Larissa, earlier mentioned by Thucydides, who, just as he had previously helped Brasidas, now effectively prevented the Spartans from passing through Thessaly. This kind of behaviour on the part of the Thessalians does not mean that an alleged anti-Spartan or pro-Macedonian party had come to the fore, but rather that the country's rulers on this occasion considered it more advantageous to do Perdiccas a favour.

[8] Cf. Sprawski 1999: 25–48; Robertson 1976:100–120.

The same explanation could account for the fact that the Thessalians were not very trustworthy allies. We know of two cases of Thessalian contingents' defecting. In 457 the Thessalians were fighting alongside the Athenians against Sparta in Boeotia. During the Battle of Tanagra the Thessalian cavalry unexpectedly withdrew from the battlefield, leaving their Athenian allies. The defection may have been a case of disobedience of orders by the cavalry, which was not in sympathy with the policy adopted by the government (Diodorus 11.79). Another famous Thessalian defection took place during the Lamian war after the death of Alexander the Great. When a rebellion against Macedonian rule broke out, the Thessalians first sent their cavalry to join the Macedonians, but soon they were induced by the Athenians to ride over to Leosthenes. Although Demosthenes insists that all Thessaly except Pelinna joined the allies, the enthusiasm for the Hellenic cause can not have been universal. It seems that a 2000-strong cavalry was the only Thessalian force participating in the war. (Demosthenes 18.12,3; 15.2).[9]

Philip's military intervention in Thessalian internal affairs and the occupation of their cities was not an exception in the history of Thessaly. It is quite a paradox that such a large and rich country was unable to protect itself efficiently against foreign intervention long before Philip's times. In 480 Thessalians were forced to accept Persian domination. Then in 476 Spartan king Leotyhides led an expedition to Thessaly and terminated the Aleuadian leadership. After 454 Athenians led the unsuccessful intervention to restore the exiled Orestes. In 424 Brasidas marched through the country without the Thessalian government's permission. Around 400 Archelaus, king of Macedonia, intervened in Larissa. About 395 a Spartan garrison was introduced to Pharsalus and in 394 Agesilaos crossed Thessaly and defeated the Thessalian army in the battle of Narthakion. Then the Spartan army freely crossed Thessaly on the way to Olynthos. In 369 Alexander of Macedon, invited by the Aleudae, placed his garrison in Larissa. In the same year Pelopidas, invited by the Aleuadae, was sent by the Boeotians to conduct Thessalian affairs to the advantage of the Boeotians. Pelopidas removed the Macedonian garrison from Larissa and for the next five years was a central figure in Thessalian politics. In 364 the Thebans defeated Alexander of Pherae and took Magnesia and Phtiotic Achaea under their control. Finally, in 353 the Phocian tyrant Onomarchus supported the tyrants of Pherae and moved their army into Thessaly.

Although Philip's intervention in Thessaly was not an exception, it soon took on a character different from previous ones. First, it did not have any counterbalance because there was no other power against which he was intervening. After the defeat of Onomarchus and the tyrants of Pherae in 352 there was no opponent who could effectively counterbalance Philip's influence in Thessaly, which naturally must have deepened its dependence on Philip. Secondly, Philip was to form much stronger bonds with the Thessalians than anyone before him.

Since the end of the nineteenth century scholars have believed that Philip was elected constitutional leader of the Thessalian League.[10] Although no source states it directly, according to many scholars there are grounds for such a thesis. First and foremost, it may be

[9] Westlake 1935: 228–235.

[10] Beloch 1922:1.529 n. 1; Westlake 1935: 200–204; Sordi 1959: 334 ff; Larsen 1960: 248.n.48; Ellis 1976: 82–84; Hammond/Griffith 1979: 220–23,278,285,294; Martin 1985: 91–92; Buckler 1989: 79–80; Errington 1990: 62–64; Hammond 1994:48–49; Helly 1995:59–66; Beck 1997: 131–132; Buckler 2003: 420–211.

supported by the fact that Philip was given the right to taxes and revenues collected at markets and in ports, as reported by Demosthenes (1.22). Acquiring control of the *periokoi*, i.e. the Perrhaebians, the Dolopians, the Magnesians and the Phtiotic Achaeans, also indicates that Philip was assigned this function.[11] The king was also to carry out a reform of the Thessalian constitution by introducing or reintroducing the function of the *tetrarch*. Demosthenes reports (9.26) that Philip established *tetrarchy* in Thessaly, as does Harpocration citing Theopompus (Harpocration s.v. tetrachia = *FGrH* 115 F 208). Thrasydaios became one of the *tetrarchs* (*FGrH* 115 F 209) according to Philip's will; Daochos (who, as we know, was close to the Macedonian king) was probably also approved by Philip (Demosthenes 18.295). It is quite widely believed that Philip's election as the leader of the Thessalian League was reported by Justin and perhaps by Diodorus Siculus.

Describing the process of claiming Philip's succession by Alexander the Great, Justin gives an account of the latter's visit to Thessaly (11.3.1–2). Eager to renew the bonds that had connected his father with the Thessalians, Alexander reminded them of the benefits Philip had bestowed on them and of his own descent from the family of the Aeacidae. The Thessalians then made him *exemplo patris dux universae gentis* and gave him *vectigalia omnia reditusque suos*. The sentence is certainly quite ambiguous but according to K.J. Beloch and many other authors it provides a basis for the assumption that Alexander was elected leader of the Thessalian League and therefore was given the right to customs and revenues. However, Diodorus (17.4.1), writing on the same event, clearly states that Alexander *prevailed upon them by formal vote of the Thessalian League to recognize as his the leadership of Greece which he had inherited from his father*. Both authors describe the event in a similar, though not identical, manner. According to Diodorus Alexander claimed descent from Heracles, according to Justin from Aeacus. Diodorus clearly speaks of Alexander's right to hegemony over the Greeks, which must refer to his leadership in the Corinthian League rather than the Thessalian League.[12] We may therefore treat these two accounts as mutually exclusive and admit that Justin's *dux universae gentis* means all the Greeks, not the Thessalians, as is clearly stated by Diodorus. However, we might also assume that the two accounts complement each other. Alexander strove for the Thessalians to recognise him as the leader of the Thessalian League and to confirm his rights to hegemony in the Corinthian League. That is why Alexander sometimes invoked the Thessalian hero Aeacus, and sometimes the more universal one, Heracles.[13] This is a bold but conceivable assumption. However, it is much more convincing to acknowledge that Justin, like Diodorus, wrote about taking over hegemony over the Greeks. Elsewhere he uses a similar phrase, *universae Greciae* (9.5.20), in the context of *koine eirene* established by Philip after Chaeronea; he describes Philip as *dux* in the context of his leadership in Greece (9.4.2; 9.5.2).[14]

Justin's *Epitome* 11.3.1–2, although most frequently cited to support the thesis of Philip's election, does not seem to provide the strongest argument. It has been rejected not only by the opponents of the hypothesis that he held an official executive position in the

[11] Philophoros (*FGrH* 328 F 56) stated that in 339 Thessalian perioikoi were in alliance with Philip.

[12] Beloch: 210. Westlake 1935: 196–204; Larsen 1960: 248 n. 48. Hammond/Griffith 1979: 222–224; Buckler 2003: 420–221.

[13] Larsen 1960: 248.48.

[14] Papastylou 1979: 50–52. Harris 1995: 175–176; Helly 1995: 64–65.

Thessalian League (e.g. E. Harris) but by advocates of the thesis as well (e.g. B. Helly).[15] It is therefore hardly surprising that in his latest book J. Buckler rightly observes that the discussion on Philip's position in Thessaly must not be limited to Justin's account, disregarding other information referring to Philip's specific status.[16] For example we may detect information on Philip's election as leader of the Thessalian League in Justin's report (8.2.1) saying that Philip was elected *dux* by the Thessalians and the Boeotians in the war against Onomarchus and the Phocians (*adversus quem Thebani Thessalique non ex civibus suis, ne victores potentiam ferre non possent, sed Philipum Macedoniae regem ducem eligunt; et externae dominationi, quam in suis timuerunt, sponte succedunt* – 8.2.1). If we compare this information with Isocrates' statement that every Thessalian had more confidence in him then in his own countrymen (5.20), it is quite probable.[17]

It is equally impossible to identify the exact time of Philip's supposed election. It might have taken place after the battle of the Crocian Field in 353. The victory over the Phocians and the expulsion of the tyrants of Pherae resulted in eliminating the competition for influence in Thessaly, -and won Philip great personal fame. Demosthenes, in his speech dated 349 (1.22), mentions that Philip was given the right to customs and revenues; this supports the theory that the election took place around that time. Another probable time of the election was the period after Philip's victory in the Sacred War in 346.[18] In this case, Philip could count on the Thessalians' support, having fulfilled his promise concerning their leading role in the Delphic Amphictiony. Demosthenes also reports Philip's continuing interventions in Thessalian affairs. In 344 Demosthenes (6.22) writes about establishing *decadarchia* in Thessaly. He probably means an oligarchic government supported by the king, similar to the famous *decarchies* established by Lysander. In 341 the author mentions the introduction of *tetrarchy*, which was reportedly connected with the increased dependence of the Thessalians and with the removal of free institutions (9.26).[19]

As we saw above, it is difficult to define the exact time of Philip's election. It is equally problematic to establish to what position the Thessalians appointed Philip, i.e. what his title and authority was. According to the majority of researchers, Philip was elected *archon*. This title was borne by an Agelaos, mentioned in the 361/0 alliance treaty signed by the Thessalians and the Athenians against Alexander of Pherae (*IG* $II^2$ 116 = Tod *GHI* 147). The Athenians agreed, among other things, to prevent Alexander overthrowing the *archon* elected by the Thessalians. The *archon* was named at the top of the list of Thessalian officials who signed the treaty. Without his and the Thessalians' agreement it was forbidden to change the treaty conditions. The title of *archon* appeared in historical sources with reference to several Thessalian leaders. Lattamyas, who commanded the Thessalian army against the Thebans prior to the Persian Wars, was supposed to be one (Plut. *Moralia* , 866), as was Echecratidas (*Anth. Palat.* 6.142 = Ankreont fgt. 107 (Diehl). The use of this title is indirectly confirmed in the inscription placed on the base of the Daochos Monument in Delphi (*SIG* $^3$ 274.6). The founder of the monument was also Daochos, a Thessalian *hieromnemon* in the 330s BC. In the inscription he wrote that his grandfather and namesake

[15] Harris 1995: 175–176; Helly 1995: 59–66.

[16] Buckler 2003: 420 n. 41.

[17] Hammond/Griffth 1979: 223 and note 2.

[18] Momigliano (1934: 140) and Sordi (1958: 261–262) date Philip's election to 344.

[19] Hammond/Griffith 1979: 257–244.

had ruled Thessaly for 27 years (ἁπάσης Θεσσλίας ἄρξας) not by force but in accordance with custom. The time of Daochos' rule is unknown but it can be placed in the second half of the 5th century. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, comparing Greek tyrants and Roman dictators, writes that the title of *archos* was used in Thessaly (*Antiq.* 5.74.3).[20] Historians have also suggested that the leader of the Thessalian League bore the title of *tetrarchos*, like the above-mentioned Daochos (a follower of Philip and a Thessalian *hieromnemon*) and his ancestor Aknonios (*SIG* [3] 274.2 and 8.)[21] However, we can say very little about the *archon*'s authority.

Many believe that the title of the head of the Thessalian League was *tagos*.[22] The first person we know to be elected *tagos* was Jason of Pherae. After him, according to Xenophon (*Hell.* 6.4.33–34), the title belonged to his two brothers, Polydorus and Polyphron, and after their death to Alexander of Pherae. The most important prerogatives were described by Xenophon (*Hell.* 6.1.8,12,19); they enabled the mobilization and command of the army of the whole Thessalian League, and the control of the *periokoi*, including the right to collect tribute and to conscript them into the army. The question of relations between *archon* and *tagos* remains a contentious issue. Some believe that it was the same office, which the Thessalians called *tagos* according to their local tradition, whereas other Greeks used the widespread term *archon*. According to others, they were two different offices. *Archon* was a regular office, whereas *tagos* was elected for the duration of the war, although he kept his office for the rest of his life. Finally, it is possible that one of the offices was created through a change in the Thessalian constitution. Jason could have introduced the office of *tagos* in the middle 370s. Alternatively, the opponents of Alexander of Pherae, denouncing his authority as *tagos*, could have appointed a new leader of the League called *archos*.

The ambiguity concerning the leader of the Thessalian League is partly due to the fact that a number of its leaders in the 6th and 5th centuries were called *basileus*. They were: Aleuas (Plutarch, *Moralia*, 492 = *De frat. Amore*, 21, *scholia in Plat., Men.*, I.70); Kineas (Herodotos 5. 63); Antiochos (Aeschines Sokratikos,(fr. 10 Krauss); the sons of Aleuas — Thorkas, Eurypylos and Thrasydaios (Pinadros, Pythian 10.1–5; 62–71; Herodotos, 7.6); Echecratydas (Thucydides 1. 111).[23] According to some historians, *basileus* was the title of the leader of the Thessalian League which appeared in the oldest texts and may be identified with *tagos* or *archon*.[24] In the older works of E. Meyer and K. J. Beloch we can find lists of Thessalian rulers, topped by the Thessalians chiefs and *basileis* from the Archaic period and ending with Jason of Pherae, his successors, and then Philip II and Alexander the Great. Officials who, according to historical sources, bore very different titles (*basileus*, *archon*, *tagos*) were listed side by side.[25] However, the meaning of the term *basileus* in early Greek history has been a matter of doubt for a long time. Many historians believe that in Thessaly

[20] Westlake 1935: 200–201; Larsen 1968: 24; Hammond/Griffith 1979: 288 n. 4; Errington 1990: 62; Buckler 2003: 419–420.

[21] Ferri 1930: 305; Helly 1995: 63–68.

[22] Momigliano 1932: 52–53; Westlake 1935: 25–26; Rhodes 1994: 585–586.

[23] Carlier 1984: 412–418; Sprawski 2000: 78–81.

[24] Sordi 1958: 65–72; 1997: 177–182.

[25] Meyer 1909: 249; Beloch 1913: 197–210. Cf. *FHG*, vol. 3: 703–704; Larsen 1960: 238–239; Larsen 1968: 14–16.

and Greece the title did not describe a monarch but members of superior aristocratic families, who held the major offices and exerted decisive influence on the fate of the state.[26]

Identifying *basileus* with the constitutional leader of the Thessalian League may seem attractive but it leads to further problems. Recently J. Buckler has again drawn attention to Aeschines Socraticus' account (fr.10 Krauss).[27] In *Aspasia* Aeschines mentions Thargelia of Miletus, who reportedly came to Thessaly and married Antiochos, the ruler of all Thessaly (βασιλεύοντι πάντων Θετταλῶν). This probably happened at the end of the 6th century BC, since Thargelia was supposedly an ardent supporter of cooperation with the Persian king. This passage enables us to assume that Antiochos' authority as *basileus* is equivalent to Daochos' authority as *archon* or Jason's as *tagos*. However, the same passage of *Aspasia* seems to exclude such an interpretation. After Antiochos' death his wife Thargelia reportedly ruled Thessaly for thirty years. It is difficult to believe that a woman and a foreigner could have become the leader of the Thessalian League. Partly for this reason I tend to share the opinion that the title of *basileus* was used with reference to members of the most powerful aristocratic families who constituted the *dynasteia* and actually ruled the state. This, however, does not exclude the possibility that in the 4th century BC, when Aeschines wrote about Antiochos and Thargelia, it was commonly believed in Athens, and maybe even in Thessaly, that old Thessalian *basileis* had in fact been monarchs.

Summing up, we may assume that the actual power in Thessaly always belonged to a narrow group of powerful aristocrats, whose leaders were called *basileis* until the middle of the 5th century. Many of them were outstanding individuals who tried to dominate the political scene. That is how we may interpret the position of Thorax and his brothers, Lycophron of Pherae, Medios of Larissa, and Simos, who managed to assume control of the state for a brief period of time. It is rather telling that we have no evidence that the persons who actually ruled Thessaly held the office of *archon* (the title of *basileus* is used only in Thorax' case). On the other hand the persons who held the title, e.g. Agelaos or Daochos, remain only names to us. For these reasons we may suspect that, with a *dynasteia* prevailing in Thessaly, the official who was the formal leader of the League had limited prerogatives; the state was in fact ruled by the people with the appropriate power, property and prestige to impose their will. This situation frequently led to instability since it encouraged competition for the actual leadership (cf. Lycophron's and Medius' fighting at the turn of the 5th and 4th centuries). The competition contributed to paralyzing the state and encouraged seeking help from foreigners. Jason of Pherae attempted to change the situation. With the power he possessed he wanted not only to take command of Thessaly but also to legitimise his supreme position. Jason did not run for another term as *archon* since this office apparently did not give him the power he wanted; instead he ran for *tagos*. Although sources mention *tagos* as an official in Thessalian cities, we have no report of anyone else using this title with reference to ruling over the whole state. In my opinion Jason created this title and endowed it with rights which ensured his advantage over any competitor — the right to mobilize and command the Thessalian army and the right to control the *perioikoi*, including the collection of tribute from them. For the title to be easier to accept, Jason may have tried to appear as if he was resuming the power and rights held by the Thessalian generals at the

[26] Robertson 1976: 105; Drews 1983: 129–131; Raaflaub 1993: 79.

[27] Buckler 2003: 420 n. 41.

time of the state's greatness, e.g. Scopas.[28] It is even possible that the old generals were called *tagos* in Jason's times, although the name did not necessarily reflect their actual position. It is likely that few people in Thessaly could have known the actual constitutional position in the Thessalian League of Scopas, who had lived 100 years before.

Jason's experiment was only partly successful. He managed to organise his election to the office of *tagos* and to gain control of all Thessaly. However, the power he amassed was so extensive that it evoked fear in some and desire in others. Within one year Jason was murdered, as were his two brothers who inherited his position. The last *tagos* was Alexander of Pherae, Jason's nephew. Before he managed to reinforce his position, he faced opposition from the Aleudae of Larissa, who questioned the legitimacy of his leadership. The title of *tagos* lost its value for Alexander, since the point of using it was the Thessalians' acceptance of its legitimacy. Alexander had the military power necessary to maintain the control of most of Thessaly and started to build his own political programme, which was not based on the office of *tagos* and the appearances of legitimacy it carried. For these reasons no one else reached for the title; probably Philip did not either.

Undoubtedly Philip won a special position among the Thessalians, who relinquished the command of their army and the right to customs and revenues, probably in wartime. Surely he was given these privileges legally, with the support of the majority. The legitimisation of his position in Thessaly need not have meant that he was elected *archon* of the League. If the title was not accompanied by any special rights and was not particularly attractive to Jason, it need not have been attractive to Philip either. Certainly the office must have been connected not only with prerogatives but also with specific duties, ceremonial at the least, and neglecting these may have easily led to discontent among the Thessalians. In my opinion, the greatest doubts about Philip's appointment to *archon* follow from the fact that, although this event was unprecedented, it passed unnoticed by his contemporaries. It is hard to believe that Demosthenes or Isocrates would have limited themselves to just a few allusions if they had been familiar with this fact.

Philip gained influence on Thessalian affairs and made several interventions to restore order. He tried to handle the Thessalians carefully, and as a result he won sufficient support. His influence was even stronger since he did not face any real opposition. The Thessalians, with all their unfaithfulness (Demosthenes 1.22), found it difficult to mobilise to act if they could not rely on efficient external support. Polydamas learned this when he was defending himself against Jason (Xenophon *Hell.* 6.1.14); so did the Thebans attempting to set Pelopidas free from the hands of Alexander of Pherae (Plutarch *Pelop.*, 29 Diodorus 15.71.4). However, the Thessalians did not lose their independence completely, which was evidenced by the outbreak of the Fourth Sacred War and the diplomatic relations with Philip's enemies (Demosthenes 18.244; Aeschines 3.83; Philochorus FGrH 328 F 56: 328). Philip's other activities in Thessaly can be clarified by his close contacts with Thessalian

[28] John Buckler (2003: 420 n. 41) argues that Jason did not create the office of *tagos* because during his conversation with Polydamas, described by Xenophon (*Hell.*, 6.1.12), Polymdamas knows what the rights of *tagos* are. However, we must not forget the circumstances of this exchange. After prolonged efforts Jason managed, partly by force and partly by persuasion, to win over the majority of the Thessalians to his side. Polydamas and Pharsalus were the last obstacle to the execution of his plans. Jason based his calculations mainly on the strength of persuasion, on the conviction that his plan was logical and attractive enough for the Thessalians to agree to support it without compulsion. Therefore the plan must have been publicly known and Polydamas must have been familiar with it.

*dynasteia* (which he found all-important), without assuming that he held the office of *archon*. His position in Thessaly may be compared not so much with that of Daochos, Jason or Agelaos as with another foreigner, Pelopidas. [29]

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[29] For the position of Pelopidas in Thessaly see Buckler 1980: 116–117.

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